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New York

President: Mr. Razali Ismail ..... (Malaysia)

The meeting was called to order at 10.05 a.m.

Statements on the occasion of the seventh Africa Industrialization Day

The President: Before turning to the items on our agenda for this morning, I should like to remind the General Assembly that today is the seventh Africa Industrialization Day. I have a statement to make in that connection, as does the Secretary-General.

To take cognizance of Africa Industrialization Day is to underline the need to make a reality of the partnership between Africa and the international community to enhance development in African countries. Even though the principle of international partnership to assist industrial development in Africa exists in various policy declarations, successful and sustained demonstrations of this commitment are few.

I make this statement at a time when the General Assembly is considering the mid-term review of the implementation of the United Nations New Agenda for the Development of Africa and when the doctrine of free market globalization seems to have captured the debate on development issues, being *de rigueur* for prospects of African economic development.

Recent reports, including that on the implementation of the United Nations New Agenda for the Development of Africa in the 1990s, clearly show that the economic needs and development aspirations of Africa have not been given urgent political and financial priority by the international community. For example, even though calls for the promotion of the private sector, increased industrial development and foreign direct investment, and the reduction of external debt in African countries are regularly made in various forums, harsh marketplace reality shows that portfolio equity investment remains virtually absent, and that less than 5 per cent of global foreign direct investment is targeted to African countries.

It should be unconscionable that financial flows to Africa remain so low despite renewed commitments by the international community to the contrary, and even more so when the majority of African countries have undertaken difficult and unpopular structural adjustment programmes that have marginalized the poor further, depleted natural resources and degraded the environment.

Perhaps the facts and fictions of economic development in Africa should no longer continue to surprise or confound us when we consider today's economic climate. For Africa, such a harsh climate makes it impossible for its economies to emulate the so-called successful models of South-East Asia. South-East Asian "tiger" economies took off when the global economy was growing; when loans, aid and development assistance from rich industrialized countries were still items on the political agenda. South-East Asian economies were also allowed to develop under domestic tutelage which ensured a high degree of strict trade controls and import barriers that enabled local industries to grow.

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Such is not the case with African economies today, especially since the conclusion of the Uruguay Round. By all objective accounts, African countries are the major losers in an expanded global economy. How then do we assist African economies to develop capacity building and the educational and technical skills that are the basic building blocks for any process of industrialization?

Despite increased commodity exports by some, on the advice of the International Monetary Fund (IMF), sub-Saharan Africa's export growth has not kept pace with the growth of its external debt. This continues to rise to unsustainable and shocking levels. Of the 40 countries that are classified as heavily indebted, 33 are in sub-Saharan Africa; the majority of them have virtually no access to financial markets or to non-concessional flows from official sources.

At the same time, many African countries have had to relinquish considerable economic control to the Bretton Woods institutions — all effective State control of the economy being replaced by the vagaries of market forces and the dictates of trade liberalization. One important factor that has prevented the industrial development of African economies is the nature of conditionalities under structural adjustment programmes. These have geared African economies towards the export of primary commodities whose prices have been depressed for decades, and have prevented new types of industry from developing. Conditions such as these have debilitated the region and prevented it from lifting itself out of socio-economic deprivation.

The Heavily Indebted Poorer Countries Debt Initiative, recently welcomed by the countries of the Group of Seven and endorsed by the joint IMF-World Bank committees, is intended to reduce the problem of multilateral, bilateral and commercial debt of the heavily indebted African countries to sustainable levels. Countries eligible under this initiative will hopefully be able to focus their energies on their economic development instead. Even though this comprehensive approach towards the issue of debt sustainability is to be welcomed, it is only a first step towards a final solution of the debt crisis which cripples the potential for greater economic, industrial and social development in Africa. It is also questionable whether commitment to structural adjustment programmes should remain the key condition for such debt relief. Many parties, including the European Commission and the World Bank, are questioning the effectiveness of current programmes.

The alliance for Africa's industrialization, initiated by the United Nations Industrial Development Organization in cooperation with the Economic Commission for Africa and the Organization of African Unity, and launched in Côte d'Ivoire last month, is yet another important initiative to revitalize African economies. This will provide a mechanism for African leaders to define appropriate industrial development strategies and commit political will and resources to their achievement. It is also an effort to draw the attention of African decision makers and the international community to Africa's industrial development potential and the need to fully realize this potential.

Even though it is important to reaffirm a strong commitment of the private sector, donor Governments, agencies and non-governmental organizations to genuine partnership for the accelerated industrial growth of Africa, a critical step must be made to design policies based on the real needs of individual African economies, as development will take place in Africa only when its peoples have democratic control over their own policies. Policies to enhance industrial development and economic growth should also strive to meet the basic needs of communities at the grass-roots level if they are to be socially and environmentally sustainable.

If we need a market rationale to convince us why we should invest in Africa, let me state that assistance to Africa is not welfare. In essence, it is an investment in other people for one's own self-interest. Africa can be, with industrialization, a huge market for the world. The rising economies in Latin America and East Asia have led to world growth. In the same way, a revitalized Africa will enhance prosperity and purchasing power for the world as a whole.

Against the background of the human tragedy in the Great Lakes region, this current session of the General Assembly has considered items such as the eradication of poverty, the plight of refugees, the impact of armed conflict on children, the issue of women and food security. Discussions of all these major issues point directly to the virtual absence of focus and commitment by the international community to the multiplicity of problems in Africa. The marginalization of Africa in all sectors of international life must end.

As President of the fifty-first session of the General Assembly, I would be without integrity if I came to this occasion to speak about African industrialization without

placing such a goal within the broader context of all the terrible ravages that beset Africa.

I now call on the Secretary-General.

The Secretary-General: As in previous years, I am pleased to join in today's celebration of Africa Industrialization Day. Since the General Assembly first proclaimed this special observance seven years ago, the United Nations system has worked hard to raise global awareness and obtain international support for Africa's industrial development.

Education, training, technology, private sector development, access to industrial and commercial information, regional integration: these are among the essential ingredients of industrialization. Together they can be a remedy for the acute economic ills that continue to affect the African continent.

The theme selected by the Conference of African Ministers of Industry for this year's celebration — "mobilization of financial resources for industry" — is both timely and appropriate. It is timely because of the pressing need to mobilize resources for Africa's development, and it is appropriate because the support of the international community remains crucial to economic recovery and development in Africa, particularly for the least developed countries.

Over the years, developing countries have registered remarkable economic progress. The share of developing countries in world industrial production, for instance, has grown from 17 per cent in 1980 to almost 20 per cent in 1995.

But while the economic prospects of many African countries have improved in recent years, Africa's overall industrial performance has continued to lag behind that of other regions in the developing world. Africa's share of global industrial output declined from 0.85 per cent in 1980 to 0.74 per cent in 1995.

This is a cause for great concern, especially when viewed against the backdrop of declining official development assistance, limited private capital flows, creeping debt burdens, widespread poverty, civil strife and political instability.

To address this situation, the United Nations New Agenda for the Development of Africa in the 1990s has made the mobilization of resources, including domestic and foreign direct investment, a top priority. Maximizing the use of existing resources and mobilizing new and additional resources are also major objectives of the United Nations System-wide Special Initiative on Africa.

I am also pleased to note the launch last month in Abidjan, by African Heads of State and Government, of the alliance for Africa's industrialization. This new initiative of the United Nations Industrial Development Organization (UNIDO), undertaken in cooperation with the Economic Commission for Africa and the Organization of African Unity, attaches great importance to the mobilization of resources through partnerships between the public and private sectors at the national, regional and international levels.

But the larger part of the resources needed for Africa's development will come from domestic sources, in keeping with Africa's proclaimed commitment to the principle of self-reliance. For this it will have to encourage private savings, improve the efficiency of tax collection, rationalize public expenditure, raise export earnings and attract foreign direct investments.

The international community should make complementary efforts, in accordance with the principle of full partnership and shared responsibility. It should improve the level, scope and modalities of official development assistance; extend and enlarge trade concessions and preferences to African countries, particularly the least developed countries; take additional and decisive measures to alleviate Africa's external debt burden; encourage and facilitate foreign direct investments; and further coordinate multi-donor assistance in accordance with Africa's development priorities.

In its endeavour to build a brighter future for itself, Africa deserves the continuous support and encouragement of the international community. But while international support is essential, the fate and future of Africa lie, in the final analysis, in Africa's hands. This, I believe, is the message of today's celebration of Africa Industrialization Day.

Agenda item 18 (*continued*)

Appointments to fill vacancies in subsidiary organs and other appointments

(h) Appointment of members of the Joint Inspection Unit

Note by the Secretary-General (A/51/108)

The President: As indicated in document A/51/108, the General Assembly is required, during the fifty-first session, to appoint five persons to fill the vacancies on the Joint Inspection Unit that will arise from the expiration on 31 December 1997, of the terms of office of Mr. Fatih Bouayad-Agha (Algeria), Mr. Homero Luis Hernández Sánchez (Dominican Republic), Mr. Boris Petrovitch Krasulin (Russian Federation), Mr. Francesco Mezzalama (Italy) and Mr. Khalil Issa Othman (Jordan).

As also indicated in document A/51/108, in accordance with article 3, paragraph 1, of the statute of the Joint Inspection Unit, the President of the General Assembly shall consult with Member States to draw up a list of five countries that will be requested to propose candidates for appointment to the Joint Inspection Unit.

After holding the necessary consultations with the regional groups, I should like to communicate to the Assembly the following information received from the Chairmen of regional groups: for one vacancy from the African States, the Group of African States has endorsed Algeria; for one vacancy from the Asian States, two countries, namely Jordan and the Syrian Arab Republic, have decided to present their candidatures; for one vacancy from the Eastern European States, the Group of Eastern European States has endorsed the Russian Federation; for one vacancy from the Latin American and Caribbean States, the Group of Latin American and Caribbean States has endorsed the Dominican Republic; and for one vacancy from the Western European and other States, the Group of Western European and Other States has endorsed Italy.

As the Group of African States, the Group of Eastern European States, the Group of Latin American and Caribbean States and the Group of Western European and Other States each have endorsed one candidate for one vacancy, namely Algeria, the Russian Federation, the Dominican Republic and Italy, those four countries will therefore be included in the list of countries to be drawn up, and each respective Government will be requested to propose a candidate for appointment to the Joint Inspection Unit.

Since from among the Asian States there are two candidates for one vacancy, in order to complete the drawing up of the list, I should like, in accordance with past practice, to consult with Member States through the procedure of holding an advisory vote by secret ballot to select one country from among the Asian States, would be requested to propose a candidate for appointment to the Joint Inspection Unit.

Although this advisory vote would not be an election, we would follow the rules of procedure of the Assembly governing elections.

If there is no objection, may I take it that the General Assembly agrees to that procedure?

It was so decided.

The President: In accordance with existing practice, the country receiving the greatest number of votes and not less than a majority of the votes of those present and voting shall be included in the list of countries to be drawn up.

May I also take it that the General Assembly agrees to that procedure?

It was so decided.

The President: In accordance with rule 93 of the rules of procedure of the General Assembly, when only one person or member is to be elected and no candidate obtains in the first ballot the majority required, a second ballot shall be taken, which shall be restricted to the two candidates obtaining the largest number of votes. If in the second ballot the votes are equally divided, and a majority is required, the President shall decide between the candidates by drawing lots.

I take it that the Assembly also agrees to that procedure.

It was so decided.

The President: Before I request the Secretariat to distribute the ballot papers, I should like to remind members of the Assembly that we are now going to proceed to the selection of one country from among the Asian States, which will be requested to propose a candidate to fill the vacancy on the Joint Inspection Unit.

The Assembly is not, I repeat, not appointing members of the Joint Inspection Unit at this time. It is only selecting one country, which will be requested to propose a candidate. Therefore, only the name of a country and not the name of an individual should appear on the ballot paper.

I should like to repeat the names of the two countries from among the Asian States that decided to present candidates: Jordan and the Syrian Arab Republic.

I should further like to point out that from the Asian States, Japan already has a national serving on the Joint Inspection Unit. The name of that State therefore should not appear on the ballot paper.

The ballot papers will now be distributed.

May I request representatives to use only those ballot papers.

I should further like to request members of the Assembly to write on the ballot paper the name of one State from among the Asian States for which they wish to vote. A ballot paper containing more than one name from among the Asian States will be declared invalid. Any ballots with the name of a State outside the relevant region or with the name of an individual shall not be counted at all.

At the invitation of the President, Mr. Ivanov (Bulgaria), Ms. Coitir (Ireland) and Mr. Acosta (Paraguay) acted as tellers.

A vote was taken by secret ballot.

The meeting was suspended at 10.45 a.m. and resumed at 11 a.m.

The President: The result of the voting is as follows:

Asian States	
Number of ballot papers:	166
Number of invalid ballots:	4
Number of valid ballots:	162
Abstentions:	0
Number of members voting:	162
Required majority:	82
Number of votes obtained:	
Jordan	86
Syrian Arab Republic	76

Jordan, having obtained the required majority, will be included on the list of countries to be drawn up.

The President: I thank members for their advice and assistance. I thank the tellers for their assistance.

In accordance with article 3, paragraph 1, of the statute of the Joint Inspection Unit, Algeria, the Dominican Republic, Italy, Jordan and the Russian Federation will be requested to submit the names of the candidates and their curricula vitae highlighting their relevant qualifications for the tasks ahead. I repeat, highlighting their relevant qualifications for the tasks ahead.

After holding the appropriate consultations described in article 3, paragraph 2 of the statute of the Joint Inspection Unit, including consultations with the President of the Economic and Social Council and with the Secretary-General in his capacity as Chairman of the Administrative Committee on Coordination, I will propose a list of qualified — I repeat, qualified — candidates to the Assembly for appointment to the Joint Inspection Unit.

We have thus concluded this stage of our consideration of sub-item (h) of agenda item 18.

Agenda item 41

Support by the United Nations system of the efforts of Governments to promote and consolidate new or restored democracies

Report of the Secretary-General (A/51/512)

Draft resolution (A/51/L.20)

The President: I call on the representative of Nicaragua, who will introduce draft resolution A/51/L.20.

Mr. Vilchez Asher (Nicaragua) (*interpretation from Spanish*): The Second International Conference on New or Restored Democracies took place in Managua, Nicaragua, from 4 to 6 July 1994, with the participation of 76 countries, including 25 observer countries. The International Conference was also attended by eminent individuals from Asia, Africa, Europe, Latin America and the Caribbean.

At that conference the Managua Declaration and Plan of Action were adopted; these address issues of great concern for democratic societies and those in transition, including mutual support among new democracies in dealing with threats to the constitutional process; the peace dividend, which is so needed to bolster democracy and development; combatting corruption, money-laundering and illicit drug trafficking and drug abuse; condemnation of all methods, forms and practices of terrorism; debt problems; governance; and so forth. At the same time, under the Managua Plan of Action it was agreed to set up a *pro tempore* secretariat, responsible to the President of the Second International Conference on New or Restored Democracies, to promote with support from the Conference Steering Committee and specialized international agencies and various countries of the international community the follow-up and implementation of the Plan of Action until the holding of the Third International Conference on New or Restored Democracies, which is scheduled for 2 to 4 September 1997 in Bucharest, Romania.

The Managua Conference helped to broaden the exchange of experiences begun in Manila, Philippines, in 1988, when the First International Conference was held with the participation of 13 States. The main purpose of the International Conferences has been to reaffirm the far-reaching importance and effectiveness of representative democracy as a system of government. They have addressed in broad and comprehensive terms the issues of transition and governance in new or restored democracies; their successes, weaknesses and prospects; and the challenges and obstacles that they must tackle in the new international environment. The Conferences have heightened the international community's awareness concerning the complexity of these processes, calling for the international community's attention and support in keeping with the principles and purposes of the United Nations Charter to strengthen the maintenance of international peace and security as well as economic and social development.

The General Assembly has considered the item "Support by the United Nations system for the efforts of Governments to promote and consolidate new or restored democracies" since its forty-ninth session. In resolution 49/30, the General Assembly recognized the importance of the Managua Declaration and the Plan of Action, and it requested the Secretary-General to study the ways and mechanisms in which the United Nations system could support the efforts of Governments to promote and consolidate new and restored democracies. Subsequently, in resolution 50/133, the Secretary-General was encouraged to continue to improve the capacity of the Organization to respond effectively to the requests of Member State through coherent, adequate support of their efforts to achieve the goal of democratization. At the same time, Member States were encouraged to promote democratization and to make additional efforts to identify possible steps to support the efforts of Governments to promote and consolidate new or restored democracies.

The Secretary-General's report contained in document A/51/512, distributed at this fifty-first session, which is the second report by the Secretary-General on this issue, gives a detailed account of the United Nations system's support to the efforts of Governments to promote and consolidate democracy. Among other things, a number of examples are given of the assistance provided by the United Nations system for political parties or movements, the mobilization of civil society, electoral assistance, communications media to enable them to act freely and independently, creating a political culture through observance and monitoring of human rights, improved accountability, support for transparency and quality of public sector management, democratic government structures, and strengthening the rule of law. We consider that this United Nations support to these sectors of the life of our country is essential and should be further strengthened.

In the same spirit, we have scrutinized the Secretary-General's report contained in document A/51/555 on the question of strengthening the rule of law, which refers to the Managua Declaration adopted by the Second International Conference as evidence of the importance that the international community attaches to the cooperation of the United Nations system in strengthening the rule of law. It likewise reaffirms the crucial links between democracy, development and human rights. The same document states that the Managua Declaration, viewed together with the Vienna Declaration and Programme of Action, provides an important framework for the improvement of United Nations efforts aimed at the strengthening of the protection of human rights, democracy and the rule of law in the countries in transition. We believe that the transition to democracy is, without question, an irreversible part of the new international order, and that this Organization should therefore collaborate in this process which is so vital for attaining world peace.

In today's world, as stated by my Foreign Minister at the informal ministerial meeting of new or restored democracies that took place on 30 September here in New

York, conflict and violence, ethnic struggles and religious intolerance, terrorism, drug trafficking, corruption, poverty and underdevelopment persist, along with the heavy burden of external debt -- factors that continue to overwhelm many of our countries. The acute shortage of resources and the degradation of the environment also persist, all of this undermining world peace and security and ultimately militating against the difficult process of global transition to democracy.

For this reason, consolidating new or restored democracies requires concerted and continuing action, both within our countries and externally, through complementary and sustained cooperation which will make it possible to consolidate peace and democracy, thereby promoting those countries' possibilities of economic and social development.

With this commitment to renewing and strengthening new or restored democracies in mind, the holding of the Third International Conference of New and Restored Democracies in Bucharest, Romania, will be a fitting opportunity once again to reaffirm our adherence to these principles. It will also offer the chance to make creative and innovative contributions based on the experience of recent years, which will undoubtedly help to perfect democracy in our countries and to bolster development plans. Democracy should be regarded as a dynamic, evolving process — a process of constant improvement.

As members of a globalized and interdependent world, the new or restored democracies must look to the future enthusiastically and consider new challenges and opportunities they face in order to continue to strengthen and consolidate their processes and interests. This is why we look forward enthusiastically to the holding of the third International Conference in Bucharest next year.

One of the challenges we face is to continue united and to preserve our links as a group of nations in transition, sharing, without distinction as to culture or region, in the complexity of the democratization process, with a common vision and a realistic plan of action for all — a plan that will encompass our aspirations and serve as a frame of reference for our initiatives to strengthen peace and development.

The international community cannot turn its back on the great efforts our countries are making to consolidate their democratic achievements, while at the same time making headway in their economic and social development despite having to tackle the aftermath of war, poverty, external debt and other crushing problems that still persist in the new international society, chiefly in the developing world.

For this reason, our group of countries, which represents more than half the United Nations membership, is once again presenting a draft resolution entitled "Support by the United Nations system of the efforts of Governments to promote and consolidate new or restored democracies", which has been distributed as document A/51/L.20. This draft resolution is similar in content to that adopted last year by this Assembly. However, it has been updated in the light of recent developments concerning this issue.

In conclusion, Nicaragua, in its capacity as current secretariat and on behalf of all the sponsors — which a number of other countries have joined — trusts that the draft resolution will be adopted by consensus by this General Assembly at the appropriate time.

Mr. Zlenko (Ukraine): The General Assembly is again discussing the issue of ways of developing and consolidating new or restored democracies. Ukraine, as one of the initiators of the inclusion of this item in the agenda of the forty-ninth session of the United Nations General Assembly, welcomes such a dialogue. We consider it to be very important and acute as never before.

It is irrefutable that, during the present conditions of challenges and upheavals, societies based on democratic principles constitute a reliable foundation capable not only of responding adequately to the challenges of our time but also of lending support to others. Therefore, we firmly believe that the more States pursue the path of democratic development, and the more confidently they undergo democratic transformation in their societies, the sooner humankind will achieve stability and prosperity. It is hardly accidental that the people of the world are beginning to understand that democracy qualifies as a key element of development and advancement towards a better future.

Consequently, the difficulties faced by States embarking on the road towards democracy cannot be considered exclusively as their domestic problems. Obviously, success in building a democratic society depends, first and foremost, on actions undertaken at the national level and on the commitment and ability of peoples and their Governments to follow the path of democratic transformation. However, much also depends on actions undertaken at the international level, where the

central role, in our view, should be assigned to the United Nations.

History has not yet created precedents in which States with deep-rooted democratic traditions threaten international peace and security. As the saying goes, democracies do not start wars. Moreover, such States make the most valuable contribution to the solution of global economic, social, cultural and humanitarian problems. Ukraine is therefore one of the countries that strongly advocate the enhancement of the role of the United Nations in establishing and consolidating democratic standards in public and social life.

In this connection, our delegation welcomes the Secretary-General's report pursuant to resolution 50/133, and endorses the proposed forms of possible support by the United Nations system of the efforts by Governments to promote and consolidate new and restored democracies.

Since decolonization, this has become yet another important challenge to the Member States of this world Organization and a new test of the purposes and principles of its Charter, specifically Article 2, paragraph 4, which says that:

> "All Members shall refrain in their international relations from the threat or use of force against the territorial integrity or political independence of any State, or in any other manner inconsistent with the Purposes of the United Nations."

In this context, our delegation would like to draw the attention of the General Assembly to the proposal made by the President of Ukraine, Leonid Kuchma, at the special commemorative meeting on the occasion of the fiftieth anniversary of the United Nations, with regard to establishing a United Nations trusteeship over the process of the formation of new independent States.

Such a mechanism would be streamlined primarily to prevent the use of force against young democracies and to support democratic trends through respect for generally recognized rules and principles of international law. In addition, such a mechanism would make it possible for the Organization to contribute a great deal to the transition of newly emerged countries towards democracy and to make them realize all the benefits to be gained by building a society on democratic principles. In our opinion, the United Nations has at its disposal the necessary machinery that can and should be engaged when there is a threat to the development and strengthening of new or restored democracies.

Ukraine welcomes the offer of the Romanian Government to host the Third International Conference of New or Restored Democracies in Bucharest in 1997 and plans to take active part in this forum. We hope that, by the time of the Conference, our country will have something new to report about our own achievements in establishing and promoting basic democratic principles in our society. We have already made good progress in this field and now, before this General Assembly, we can clearly state that the democratic process in Ukraine is under way and has become irreversible. This is one of the major gains of the five years of Ukraine's independence.

Almost five years ago, on 1 December 1991, in a national referendum, the people of Ukraine confirmed its sovereign will and determination to build its own independent State with a predictable domestic and foreign policy to integrate our nation into the European family of free democracies. Among the significant accomplishments of this period was the adoption, on 28 June this year, of the Constitution, which set forth the guidelines for building a consolidated democratic Ukrainian State and gave an important impetus to promoting further democratic values in our pluralistic and multinational society. In this endeavour, Ukraine will continue to count on the support of the United Nations and of the world community as a whole.

We are deeply convinced that our domestic successes cannot be separated from other efforts aimed at promoting and strengthening the principles of democracy throughout the world.

Mr. Minoves-Triquell (Andorra) (*interpretation from French*): The Principality of Andorra welcomes the report of the Secretary-General on support by the United Nations system of the efforts of Governments to promote and consolidate new or restored democracies.

Indeed, for a State like ours, which over the centuries has been spared non-democratic interludes, but which, because of its geographic situation, has nonetheless been in a position to appreciate the dangers that threaten democracy and, in the course of many conflicts, has welcomed refugees fleeing authoritarian regimes. For a State like ours, the question of consolidating democracy is very close to our hearts.

We also have some experience in restoring the balance of democracy. In the 1970s, we began a process of reform of institutions, which accelerated in the late 1980s, leading to the new Constitution of 1993. We are

therefore very familiar with the complexities involved in any constitutional reform and all the delicate processes leading to a new formula for political life, and we are in solidarity with those who are involved in this.

(spoke in Spanish)

The United Nations can and must play a special role in assisting the consolidation of democracy. Electoral assistance is one of the means at its disposal, and is one of the areas in which we have seen evidence of cooperation between the United Nations, the Inter-Parliamentary Union and other organizations.

Similarly, the important legal work of the United Nations, which is often overlooked but to which we pay tribute today, contributes to the consolidation of the state and rule of law in many countries. As a small State, Andorra is following very closely all initiatives aimed at advancing the rule of law throughout the world.

These and other elements mentioned by the Secretary-General in his report help us to consolidate what is called political democracy. In his book *The Breakdown of Democratic Regimes*, Juan Linz writes:

(spoke in English)

> "Let us be clear that political democracy does not necessarily assure even a reasonable approximation of what we could call a democratic society, a society with considerable equality of opportunity in all spheres, including social equality as well as opportunity to formulate political alternatives and mobilize the electorate for them." *(Linz, Juan, The Breakdown of Democratic Regimes. Johns Hopkins University, Baltimore, 1978)*

(spoke in Spanish)

A democratic society can only be formed by citizens through their constancy and their values. The United Nations must also contribute to this process, promoting education in human rights and democratic values, especially for the children and young people who will make up civil society of the twenty-first century.

Andorra is working actively in this direction and will address this issue at greater length next week at the World Youth Forum in Vienna.

Mr. Castelli (Argentina) (*interpretation from Spanish*): My delegation has particular satisfaction in speaking on agenda item 41, "Support by the United Nations system of the efforts of Governments to promote and consolidate new or restored democracies," that is, the support this Organization provides to those striving to strengthen or consolidate their democratic systems of government.

As our Presidents have repeatedly stated at successive Latin American summit meetings and in other regional forums, we reaffirm that democracy and respect for human rights and for the fundamental human freedoms are essential values for our countries. Those values are the three central pillars of the modern State, making it possible to establish the link between democracy and development and to form the requisite framework for improving the well-being and stability of our societies.

As my country noted at the last meeting on this subject in September, Latin America and the Caribbean quickly understood that in the last few years of this century democratic systems of government must be consolidated conclusively. For decades, our region suffered under totalitarian regimes that denied citizens the participation necessary to correct abuses and root out corruption or arbitrary use of power by replacing leaders who had lost the confidence of the people. In this, we are in step with the great movement towards freedom that was exemplified in such a historic and moving way by the collapse of the Berlin Wall.

In the same spirit, the Charter of the Organization of American States (OAS) has been modified to make authoritarianism even more incompatible with membership, and human rights conventions became international legislation in most countries. Thus, in the context of this new global scenario an increasingly large number of countries adopted and recognized democracy as the best system of government, thereby strengthening regional and international peace and security.

In this process of democratic consolidation an important role has been played by political parties and movements as well as by non-governmental organizations. As an example of the activities of non-governmental organizations we can cite the case of Guatemala, where United Nations support for the participation of civil society has actively contributed to governance in the process of Central American peace and democratization.

In addition to those examples, we see the United Nations system participating not only in conflict settlement but in assistance for confidence-building measures that can consolidate post-conflict situations. We also recall the presence of electoral observers, whose important work in election organization and verification has helped to foster respect for freedom and human rights, making the wishes expressed by the majority of the population irreversible.

We reaffirm our conviction that it is the democratic system that enables the expression of the popular will to be properly channelled, producing leaders unswervingly committed to carrying out the mandate entrusted to them. We believe that the framework of democracy and freedom thus established produces a wealth of initiatives and opportunities that derive from political and economic freedom. This is not some unrealistic dream. We can state pragmatically that oppression and authoritarianism ultimately destroy the very regimes that sustain them.

The modern formula for development is based on these freedoms, but it is also based on the responsibilities of the State to society, as the guarantor of individual freedoms and of the strengthening of the system itself.

We agree with the Secretary-General's statement in his report on this point, where he notes that the democratization process has coincided with expectations that Governments will be more responsive to the demands of citizens and conduct their business in a more transparent manner. The growing demand for fairer forms of administration, free from any kind of corruption, is today an absolute requirement for those mandated to administer the public sector.

For those reasons, countries that enjoy democracy today have an obligation to foster and promote it among those to whom it is still lacking and to reaffirm their total support for the consolidation of the transition processes.

For these reasons, my country has actively participated in the processes of democratization in Central America and the Caribbean, lending technical, economic and financial assistance and participating as electoral observers and in peacekeeping operations whenever called upon to do so. Similarly, we took part in the Second International Conference on New or Restored Democracies at Managua, and we will be present at the next Conference, to be held in Romania.

In conclusion, we wish to stress the responsibility incumbent on the United Nations, in accordance with its Charter, to help to strengthen new democracies and prevent a return to anachronistic systems of oppression. Thus, we must promote the efforts towards bilateral and multilateral cooperation being made by the private sector, the United Nations system and regional and non-governmental organizations to consolidate all these changes.

Mr. Campbell (Ireland): I have the honour to speak on behalf of the European Union. The following associated countries — Bulgaria, Cyprus, the Czech Republic, Estonia, Hungary, Latvia, Lithuania, Malta, Poland, Romania, Slovakia and Slovenia — have aligned themselves with this statement. Iceland and Liechtenstein have also aligned themselves with the statement.

The 1990s has been the decade of democratization. Around the world, regimes based on racism, dictatorship and oppression have been replaced by systems of government where the will of the people is decisive. Today, in only a handful of countries are citizens denied the right to govern themselves, and the process of democratization begun two decades ago allows us to look forward to a time when all Member States of the Organization will be governed by democratic means.

Democratic government takes many forms. There is no single model of democratic governance. Every democracy, being rooted in the individual conditions of its own society, adopts slightly different forms. But every democracy, be it federal or unitary, presidential or parliamentary in form, respects certain key requirements. Periodic and genuinely free elections are essential to a democratic system, but are not sufficient in themselves. Citizens must also enjoy freedom of association and the right to form political parties. The first requirement of democratic governance is the accountability of Government to the citizen, the ability of the citizen to recall the Government and the possibility for all citizens to participate fully in the taking of decisions that affect their lives. It requires an effective separation of powers between the legislative and executive branches of Government and the judiciary. That judiciary must be independent in its functioning. It also requires the full respect of all human rights, and measures to ensure that the rights of those belonging to ethnic, religious, or political minorities are fully respected. In this context, the rights of freedom of expression and opinion, as well as full access to independent information, assume particular importance.

To ensure that the views of citizens are adequately reflected between elections, democratic Governments also recognize and accept a wide variety of dynamic measures to enable the citizens to participate more fully in government and to retain control of their own destiny. These include the possibility for individuals to communicate frequently with their parliamentary representatives. But they also include the ability for non-governmental organizations to make their views known and to try to change the views of these representatives and other decision makers.

The Secretary-General, in his report of 18 October 1996, provides both an extensive analysis of the issues involved in the support of new or restored democracies, and a detailed account of the activities undertaken within the United Nations system to promote and consolidate this democratization process. The report rightly points out that these activities cannot be compartmentalized. Rather, they should be, and they are, incorporated into the wider efforts of the United Nations to promote sustainable human development, including through the establishment of effective, free and transparent systems of governance. They are also integrated into United Nations actions in the fields of peacemaking, peacekeeping and peace-building.

The European Union supports and underlines the importance of the many efforts being undertaken within the United Nations system, including the Electoral Assistance Division, the United Nations Development Programme (UNDP) and the World Bank, in support of democratization. We particularly wish to commend the efforts of the High Commissioner for Human Rights in relation to democratization. Since his appointment, he has undertaken measures to ensure that the human rights programme adopts a positive and action-oriented approach to human rights, democracy and development. This includes the opening of field offices in a number of countries and ensuring that technical cooperation is provided, as a matter of priority, to countries that are beginning the transition to democracy.

It is extremely important to enhance the coordination of the various activities in support of democratization being undertaken by different United Nations bodies. We note that the Administrative Committee on Coordination's Task Force on an Enabling Environment for Economic and Social Development has established a subgroup on capacity-building for governance. We consider this an important development, and urge that the High Commissioner for Human Rights should be able to participate fully in its work.

The European Union and its member States are actively engaged in promoting democratization and the transition towards permanently responsive systems of government. This engagement takes numerous forms. The Union and its member States have frequently participated in observing electoral processes. The Union's development cooperation policy emphasizes positive action in the promotion of human rights and democracy. We are implementing a number of projects in support of the rule of law, the transition to democracy and the strengthening of non-governmental organizations and other institutions promoting a pluralist society. The corollary of this positive action is that serious and persistent violations of human rights or interruptions in democratization call for appropriate reaction, including, in certain cases, the suspension of cooperation agreements between the Union and the countries concerned.

To conclude, we actively and strongly support the activities being undertaken by the Secretary-General and other members of the United Nations system to promote the process of democratization around the world.

Mr. Mabilangan (Philippines): One decade ago, the Filipino people sought to renew their commitment to democracy in what was to be known as the "People's Power Revolution", which demonstrated the triumph of the popular will in a non-violent yet forceful manner. This historic event also revealed the universal character of democracy, as people's power spread to Latin America, Eastern Europe and Africa.

The Philippines took the initiative to unite countries and peoples which had experienced democratic renewal into a movement which was to be called the "Newly Restored Democracies". The movement developed into what is now called the "New and Restored Democracies", to reflect the broader spectrum of the democratic experience among nations.

The movement's First International Conference of Newly Restored Democracies (ICRND) was held in Manila in 1988. The Conference's Manila Declaration affirmed a commitment to democracy which encompasses the exercise of personal freedom as well as the enjoyment of national sovereignty and development, emphasized the fact that mutual support among new democracies could overcome all internal and external threats, and called for solidarity with older democracies.

Our brother nation across the Pacific, Nicaragua, whose history parallels our own, hosted the next meeting

in 1992. The Managua Declaration reaffirmed the indissoluble link between peace, democracy and development, and promulgated a plan of action to consolidate and expand the gains of new democracy on a global level. The transcontinental nature of the movement is reflected in the election of the next host of the movement, Romania, which will hold the third ICNRD next year in Bucharest. In preparation for the next conference, an informal ministerial meeting of the ICNRD, in which the Foreign Ministers of the Philippines, Nicaragua and Romania and other ministers participated, was held in New York last September.

While democracy has deep universal roots in the collective psyche of mankind, its blossoming needs careful nurturing in the same way as a delicate flower. Democracy, for it to flourish, needs the support of the international community, through the United Nations. The movement is grateful to the United Nations community, particularly to the General Assembly and to the Secretary-General, for their clear manifestations of support. We warmly received last year's General Assembly resolution 50/133, which welcomed the first report of the Secretary-General on ways and means by which the United Nations could support new and restored democracies. We are deeply appreciative of this year's report by the Secretary-General, which details the assistance rendered to Governments. Such assistance was rendered in two areas: promotion of democratic culture, and improvement of the capacity of the United Nations system to respond to the requests of Governments to promote new or restored democracies. This report will provide an invaluable input for the ICNRD.

We ask the General Assembly once again to approve the report and adopt the draft resolution reaffirming the United Nations support to new and restored democracies by consensus. This item should also be included in the work of the fifty-second session of the General Assembly.

The universal spirit of democracy is a vital and growing one in the world today, a spirit which guides and sustains the direction of the United Nations.

Mr. Whannou (Benin) (*interpretation from French*): The delegation of Benin is eagerly taking part in the discussion of the agenda item that gathered us all here today entitled "Support by the United Nations system of the efforts of Governments to promote and consolidate new or restored democracies". The Government of Benin takes the view that all States, whatever their political system, economic level or cultural characteristics, are duty-bound to promote, protect and respect human rights and fundamental freedoms, the keystone of the edifice of democracy. In this respect, Benin reaffirms its deep commitment to respect for human rights and fundamental freedoms whose promotion and protection are a legitimate concern of the international community.

In this vein, Benin has continued to make progress in consolidating our democratic experiment which began at the historic National Conference of Active Forces of the Nation in February 1990. I know that the entire Assembly has attentively watched the profound qualitative changes in Benin's political life and it would be remiss of me if I failed today to take this welcome opportunity to thank the Assembly for the special interest with which it has followed our major political event; the recent presidential election, held in March 1996, which in a peaceful and orderly fashion, without violence and without bloodshed, led to a democratic change of Government, in perfect conformity with the Constitution that has been in force in the country since December 1990. The Assembly will agree with me that the generally proper and legitimate election, the peaceful behaviour of the vast majority of the national political class, the courageous and responsible attitude of the people of Benin and the unwavering rigour of the Constitutional Court are telling signs of genuine political maturity and an irreversible commitment to building a truly democratic society in the Republic of Benin.

In order to carry out its programme to build a State based on the rule of law and a prosperous nation in which all citizens of Benin will enjoy basic necessities, the Government of Benin would like greater support and assistance from the entire international community. We know that simply meeting the requirements of the ritual of electoral polls will not be enough to establish and guarantee lasting democracy in a country.

Democracy can only be consolidated through harmonious, smooth, sustainable economic development. Nor can it be strengthened without lasting peace. This means that there is an intrinsic link between democracy, development and peace. On the basis of the results of the Managua International Conference on New or Restored Democracies, we must lay the foundations of genuine partnership among our various countries that have committed themselves to this arduous but noble undertaking. We must prevent this experiment from becoming a regrettable venture.

Democracy is not and cannot be an end in itself. It must not just resolve the key problems of society, it

should also promote the full development of the individual by being firmly rooted in economic and social development and social justice, and enjoy the necessary participation of all citizens in the life of society. We need to close ranks to meet the major challenges that can face democracy, such as poverty and all it entails, the spectre of ethnic conflict, illicit drug trafficking, international terrorism, religious fanaticism, the spread of the AIDS pandemic, the ravages of malaria, and so forth.

Our peoples cannot wait for development. This is why the Managua Plan of Action must be put into effect with the generous assistance of the established and wealthier democracies and the United Nations system. The countries that I venture to call the established and wealthier democracies are duty-bound to display some degree of political resolve in order to ensure once and for all the survival of democracy in countries that have just restored or won back democracy. They must therefore pay special attention not only to the Plan of Action we prepared at the Managua Conference but also to national programmes and projects that our Governments will be presenting to them in the context of development or economic recovery. Only respect for the commitments enshrined in the various international consensus instruments will help strengthen the democratic process in the countries that have embarked on this path.

We can also rely on the willingness of the United Nations system which has already made a great contribution to the establishment of democracy in more than one country and which can still do a great deal to strengthen new or restored democracies by providing increased assistance in all fields of activity.

If democracy is to have real meaning and realize its full liberating and redeeming potential, it must be present at both the national and the global levels. This means that democracy should also underpin and guide the organization and conduct of international relations. The world, long split by the East-West confrontation, and today marked by imbalances between North and South, can and must now devise and give effect to new democratic relations among States in the interest of peace and prosperity around the world.

The delegation of Benin welcomes the strengthening of democracy around the world, and hopes that the Assembly's adoption of draft resolution A/51/L.20, introduced by the Ambassador of Nicaragua on behalf of a number of countries, including my own, will be one more milestone towards support of the United Nations system of the efforts of Governments to promote and consolidate new and restored democracies.

Mr. Wensley (South Africa): The agenda item before us today is one to which my delegation attaches particular importance. South Africa is a young democracy which received electoral assistance from the United Nations in the form of a verification mission in 1994. My delegation therefore sees the role of the United Nations in promoting the means for citizens throughout the world to participate freely and democratically in the decision-making processes in their societies as critical.

The role of the United Nations in peacemaking, peacekeeping and peace-building often overshadows its role as an Organization which promotes human development and helps Member States to provide more equitable and effective governance to their peoples and strengthen civil society. My delegation therefore agrees with the central idea as contained in An Agenda for Development that improving and enhancing good governance is an essential condition for the success of any strategy for development.

In this context, my delegation further welcomes the report of the Secretary-General (A/51/512), which notes the importance of promoting a democratic culture and improving the capacity of the United Nations system to respond to requests of Governments to promote and consolidate new or restored democracies. We also note that a fundamental element of the present report is the need for the United Nations system to integrate civil society into its efforts to consolidate democratic development.

South Africa's recent experience since its first truly democratic elections just over two years ago has indicated that the benefits of a vibrant democracy -- at both the national and the local levels — with the full participation of all political parties, movements and civil society has again proven the value of the necessity for all Member States to strive for and promote a political culture of full participation and consultation in the affairs of state.

The dark days of racial domination, tyranny and authoritarianism have indeed been relegated to the dustbin of history in my country and South Africa is committed to contributing actively to the promotion of the ideals of democracy in other parts of the world.

The United Nations system also plays a key role in the fields of institution-building and governance. In the

fields of accountability and efficient public sector management, the United Nations Development Programme (UNDP) and the World Bank play a leading role. In South Africa, the latter organization has been providing advice in areas such as budgeting and decentralization.

Due to our own painful past experiences, my delegation also commends the ongoing efforts of the Department of Public Information in encouraging the development of a free and responsible press as an essential element for effective democratization through its series of regional seminars, organized in cooperation with the United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization (UNESCO), and supported by UNDP, on promoting pluralistic and independent media.

My delegation also recognizes the importance, as outlined in the report of the Secretary-General, of the establishment of efficient legal institutions for the rule of law to prevail and for democracy to become a reality. In this context, South Africa's independent Constitutional Court ensures that central Government actions and those of local Government bodies are in line with our Bill of Human Rights.

My delegation further welcomes with satisfaction the initiative which the Administrative Committee on Coordination has taken in the area of institution-building and governance. In this regard, we commend the establishment within the Task Force on an Enabling Environment for Economic and Social Development of a subgroup on capacity-building for governance chaired by UNDP, as well as efforts aimed at the improvement of UNDP's internal capacity to respond effectively to requests to support the strengthening of democratization.

In recognition of the role of civil society, together with good governance, the United Nations Conference on Trade and Development (UNCTAD) has broadened its work programme in enhancing trade and investment opportunities to include the role of civil society in development. In this regard, the ninth session of UNCTAD, held in South Africa, reaffirmed the importance of involving non-governmental actors in the activities of the Organization.

We fully recognize that civil society has a distinct role to play in the pursuit of the objective of sustainable development through accountable governance and administration. However, civil society alone does not have at its disposal the means to ensure this. My delegation therefore wishes to register its concern at the observation by the Secretary-General that the Organization's capacity to respond to the requests of Member States to consolidate and promote new and restored democracies may often be limited by the lack of adequate funding.

My delegation calls upon Member States to recognize their responsibilities in order to enable the Organization to fulfil its role in assisting other Member States to help promote and consolidate democratic cultures and societies.

In conclusion, my delegation fully supports the draft resolution before us (A/51/L.20) and expresses the hope that it will be adopted by consensus.

Mr. Enkhsaikhan (Mongolia): When addressing the General Assembly early last month, the Prime Minister of Mongolia underlined that:

> "Today no country can afford to stay aloof from the tremendous transformations that are going on. In Mongolia, this year ushered in a new era. As a result of general elections held last summer, State power has been peacefully transferred to democratic political forces for the first time in 75 years. This marks the logical culmination of the 1990 democratic revolution and lays a solid foundation for stable democratic development. It is also a result of the simultaneous pursuit of both political and economic reforms." (*Official Records of the General Assembly, Fifty-first Session, Plenary Meetings, 16th meeting, p. 11*)

Mongolia's choice for democratic development is natural. Democracy, as is stated in the Managua Declaration — which was adopted at the Second International Conference on New or Restored Democracies, held from 4 to 6 July 1994 — guarantees the sovereignty of peoples and the existence of the rule of law, as well as the full exercise, respect for and protection of human rights and social practices aimed at the peaceful search for human development. My Government considers it the best way to achieve human, social, political and economic development on the basis of human values and rights.

Our choice is also in conformity with the growing trend towards democracy and political pluralism worldwide, as well as with the objectives and principles enshrined in the Charter of the United Nations.

As is known, Mongolia embarked upon a comprehensive political and economic reform in 1990. This process constitutes the essence of the newly-formed Government's detailed reform agenda, which covers the period up to the year 2000. It emphasizes the need to consolidate democratic gains and to deepen and accelerate the fundamental restructuring of our economy on the basis of market principles and private sector development.

The reform agenda takes into account the level of political reform achieved and places particular emphasis on economic reform, some of the major tasks of which are to expand and accelerate the privatization process, to restructure the public sector and commercial banks, to establish a financially sound energy sector and so on.

In undertaking these steps, the Government is well aware that some of the measures to revive the country's economy — by liberating the prices of electricity, heating and gasoline and by restructuring the banking and financial sectors — would inevitably affect the well-being of the population at large, leading, perhaps, to disenchantment and even discontent, as the experience of some other countries in transition clearly demonstrates.

Therefore, in this initial period of democratic reform, international support and assurances are of crucial importance in alleviating or offsetting the negative economic and social consequences which economic reform and structural adjustment programmes usually entail. If the social cost of adjustment is not minimized, the reform process will run the risk of being derailed.

The international community should therefore lend, as before, moral and methodological support, as well as economic, financial and other assistance which would allow the Governments of new or restored democracies to proceed with bold steps to create a thriving market economy and a democratic system and to alleviate the social costs sustained in the process.

The Mongolian Government's reform programme attaches vital importance to improving and enhancing governance, which is essential for its democratic development. This objective is to be achieved through Mongolia's Management Development Programme, which is a comprehensive effort designed to enhance both public and private sector management capacities.

Another aspect of the reform process that I would like to touch upon briefly is the importance of creating the necessary conditions for the enjoyment of human rights and the role of non-governmental organizations.

It goes without saying that Mongolia is deeply committed to protecting and promoting human rights. It is a party to most of the major international human rights instruments. The incorporation of international human rights standards into national laws and policies and the building or strengthening of national institutions capable of protecting and promoting human rights and democracy under the rule of law are an inseparable, essential part of the democratic reform process and hence should be supported.

Non-governmental organizations are a major factor in the democratization and development efforts. Of crucial importance is their mobilization in support of the provision of essential social and other services in a manner complementary to the efforts of Governments. Today, a considerable share of development assistance is channelled directly through non-governmental organizations. My Government welcomes this trend, as it can promote a counterbalance to unnecessary Government interference and supports the growth of a civil society.

Like many other developing countries undergoing fundamental changes, Mongolia is faced with a host of problems. A low level of development, poverty, unemployment, the external debt burden and an underdeveloped national economic structure vulnerable to fluctuations of the world market are some of the major ones. Despite these hardships, the Government of Mongolia is determined to undertake decisive measures to speed up the reform process.

The Government and people of Mongolia consider the country's democratic development to be an inseparable part of the ongoing overall world democratic process. We are gratified to note that a growing number of countries are, like Mongolia, embracing democratic principles and values.

Being familiar with the problems and difficulties of bold undertakings, we heartily welcome bilateral and multilateral assistance in support of reforms in countries with new or restored democracies. The consolidation of democratic processes is not only important for strengthening peace and international security; but is also in the best interests of achieving the objectives and principles enshrined in the United Nations Charter. It is therefore important for the United Nations to support the efforts of the Governments of the new or restored

democracies. My delegation believes that United Nations capacities in that direction are far from exhausted.

Moreover, my delegation believes in the capacity of the world community to find fresh, innovative ways and means to support new or restored democracies. One major approach could be the use of the benefits that the reduction of arms production and sales would generate. It is also important to broaden the dialogue between the older democracies and the new or restored ones in order to strengthen and consolidate democracy and promote development, taking into account the specificity, complexity and cohesion of the reform processes and the different roles of international, regional, intergovernmental and non-governmental organizations in the promotion of democratic principles.

I should like to thank the Secretary-General for his informative and comprehensive report presented to the General Assembly on the support by the United Nations system of the efforts of Governments to promote and consolidate new and restored democracies, as contained in document A/51/512. My delegation notes with interest and appreciation the sections covering the assistance which the United Nations system is providing in institution-building, particularly in the areas of creating and strengthening democratic structures of government, enhancing the rule of law and improving accountability, transparency and quality in public sector management. We find the information and conclusions therein useful and valuable for our own bold undertakings.

In conclusion, I would like to emphasize that my delegation looks forward to the Third International Conference of New or Restored Democracies, to be held in Bucharest in September 1997. We believe that it will provide us with an opportunity to objectively evaluate the results of the implementation of the Managua Declaration and Plan of Action and will give further impulse to the attainment of its objectives.

Bearing all this in mind, my delegation has become a sponsor of draft resolution A/51/L.20.

Mr. Popescu (Romania): Romania subscribes to the statement delivered by the representative of Ireland on behalf of the European Union and its associated States and shares the views expressed therein. I would like to add some comments of particular interest to my delegation.

Romania is pleased to see the item entitled "Support by the United Nations system of the efforts of Governments to promote and consolidate new or restored democracies" discussed for the third consecutive session and enjoying increasing interest.

In this respect, we welcome the second report of the Secretary-General, which describes in a comprehensive manner the activities of the United Nations aimed at promoting a democratic culture and at improving the capacity of the Organization to meet the needs of Governments in this field. We also appreciate the report's conceptual approach, as reflected in paragraphs 4, 5 and 6. It is clear, accurate and cautious and defines ideas we can all embrace.

The report acknowledges that an active role of the United Nations, based on its authority and prestige, fully responds to the spirit and objectives of the Charter. We do believe that, indeed, the United Nations can play a significant part in supporting democratization as a catalyst of domestic, economic and social development and of the maintenance of international peace and security.

Along the same lines, the report of the Secretary General on the work of the Organization recognizes in its conclusion that democratization, peace and development are the main dimensions by which the impact of the United Nations on the global society is to be measured.

The world Organization can and should build upon a new and realistic vision of democratization. That vision should consecrate the perennial moral and pragmatic values of democracy, which are of universal relevance. At the same time, it should encompass the exceptional political, cultural, demographic and religious diversity of the nations of the world.

There is no need of a more exact and richer reference to the concept of democracy in the United Nations Charter than that which inspired its opening: "We the peoples..." After centuries of turbulent human history, we do not know a form of government that better responds to the aspirations and the needs of the peoples of all continents. Democracy is a system of values pregnant with realistic promises and seizable opportunities. The building of democratic societies and institutions is one of the most efficient conflict-prevention measures that can be taken, in terms both of political and participatory structures and of human mentality and behaviour.

For countries that, after decades of totalitarianism, are again enjoying the benefits of exercising all basic

freedoms, democracy is the promise of prosperity and the full affirmation of the individual values and national potential. The international community must encourage and support the translation of these aspirations into reality.

For countries and regions affected by conflicts, democracy is a promise of peace, stability and normality. Measures aimed at democratization should be seen as part of any post-conflict peace-building effort the United Nations might embark upon.

As underlined in the report of the Secretary-General, the forms taken by democracies depend on the characteristics and circumstances of cultures and societies, which exclude generally applicable definitions and patterns. Indeed, democratic principles cannot deny the immense variability of human experience and human attributes. They are essentially based on the equality of human beings. However, access to decision-making, equality before the law with true access in practice to judicial and other mechanisms, equality of opportunity, equal access to mass media and freedom to organize and express views without hindrance form a core of essential democratic values.

Yet any democracy needs a systematic, fair process for implementing the freely expressed wish of the governed. Free and fair elections are only a crucial starting point. Another component of democratic society is the development of strong civic organizations. If we acknowledge the splendid diversity of countries and cultures all over the world, we should also acknowledge the no less magnificent distinctions among groups and individuals. In chapter II of the report, a proper emphasis is placed on the role of the United Nations in strengthening civil society. Indeed, civil society builds democracy by allowing permanent change and the evolution of values through non-violent conflict. Groups compete with each other and with the State for power and the consent of society to carry out specific agendas. Civil society increases the effectiveness of coalitions of individuals for innovative activities, and, within the context of institutionalized competition, tolerance and acceptance of opposition can develop on a permanent basis.

Democracy also means pluralism. Pluralism fosters the dynamic interplay of ideas, enterprises, actors and a great variety of non-governmental groups on the basis of mutual respect and sensitivity to fundamental human rights. Are these values and principles at variance with the purposes of the United Nations? Nobody could say so. The United Nations can help to create an atmosphere in which democratic ideas are meaningful and worth striving for. Some of these values have already been taken on board: awareness of mechanisms for non-violent conflict resolution; policies and mechanisms that protect basic human rights; tolerance of diversity, including religious and ethnic differences; and legitimate and fair representation.

In the chapter on observations and recommendations, the report of the Secretary-General indicates the need for the United Nations system to integrate civil society into its efforts to consolidate democratic developments. The possibilities of cooperation and dialogue are unlimited. I should like to provide just two relevant examples from the region that I come from.

The programme on democracy, governance and participation, initiated and developed by the United Nations Department for Development Support and Management Services, represents a praiseworthy attempt to take a multifaceted approach to the complex democratic and societal transformations pursued by the countries in Central Europe, the Baltic States and the Commonwealth of Independent States (CIS). The emphasis of democracy, governance and participation projects on the development of democratic systems, sound and good governance and citizen's participation in State affairs demonstrates an important potential for a genuine partnership between United Nations institutions, countries hosting projects, and donors.

The activities included in the democracy, governance and participation programme constitute an evolving, adapting and updating process, which is obviously not perfect, but is already productive and very promising. The United Nations Development Programme and its Regional Bureau for Europe and the CIS deserve our full appreciation for their pioneering work.

Another initiative — outside the United Nations context — was a seminar entitled "Democratization: Interaction of Social, Economic and Political Determinants in Promoting and Consolidating New or Restored Democracies in the CIS Countries and Eastern Europe". It was intended as a follow-up meeting of the first report of the Secretary-General on new or restored democracies. The meeting took place in Finland in December 1995 and was organized by a Finnish research centre. It provided valuable insights into the problems that new democracies are dealing with. Leading experts from academic circles and non-governmental organizations offered precisely the kind of interconnection and collaboration that the United Nations is currently seeking.

Such meetings, wherever they take place, are useful to all United Nations Member States. They can only demonstrate that the United Nations, in debating and undertaking measures in support of democratization processes, is taking a necessary and rewarding course of action.

The Government of Romania is honoured to be the future host of the Third International Conference of New or Restored Democracies, due to take place from 2 to 4 September 1997. My country has recovered its democratic traditions after 45 years of totalitarianism and, in December 1989, expressed its irreversible option in favour of democratic values, the rule of law, respect for human rights and fundamental freedoms. Romania wants to bring its own contribution to the continuation and deepening of the international dialogue aimed at making democracy a main factor for the overall progress of nations and the positive development of international relations.

We are encouraged by the interest expressed by the Member States that participated in the Informal Ministerial Meeting on New or Restored Democracies, held at United Nations Headquarters on 30 September 1996, to cooperate with the Romanian Government in preparing the Third International Conference. We are grateful to the delegation of Nicaragua for having organized the Ministerial Meeting and for the manner in which it fulfils its function of *pro tempore* secretariat of the Conference.

In its desire to make the 1997 Conference a success, Romania is relying on the sympathy and support of interested Member States. As suggested in document A/51/512, the report of the Secretary-General will indeed be of use during deliberations at the Bucharest Conference. We hope that the results of next year's Conference will also benefit the Organization and bring fresh ideas to ways of acting in dealing with this important challenge for the United Nations.

It is our hope that the draft resolution on support by the United Nations system of the efforts of Governments to promote and consolidate new or restored democracies will be adopted by consensus.

Mr. Sychou (Belarus) (*interpretation from Russian*): The process of restoring and establishing new democracies has become global. It is now a solid international reality. Regrettably and all too frequently, its main attributes are structural crisis, stagnation of production, a serious lack of capital investments, galloping inflation, general deregulation of the economy, increasingly widespread unemployment and, as an inevitable result, increased social contradictions. I should point out that the attempts of these Governments to stabilize the situation on their own too often fail to be adequately and clearly understood in society, where a well-adapted system of social safeguards is lacking. The situation is exacerbated by the disappointing results experienced by several countries in converting military production and in arms reduction when compliance with international commitments becomes a factor in diverting already meagre resources and funds from the urgent needs of economic development.

At the two previous sessions of the General Assembly, we pointed out that the lack of visible signs of understanding and tangible measures on the part of the developed nations in assisting the new and restored democracies could be interpreted as an unfavourable external factor and have serious consequences for both national harmony and regional stability.

This problem has squarely confronted the countries with transitional economies, in which, in a number of instances, the process of transition has been a painful one indeed. It has threatened to topple the basic pillars of society, challenge generally accepted values, disrupt economic life, and increase domestic problems. As a consequence, the reserve of social stability in these societies has been depleted. Where prevention efforts lag, crisis phenomena begin to threaten both the countries themselves and others in their regions. Urgent measures, agreed upon at a high level, are required.

These and other factors show that essentially, new democracies all have faced the same tasks. Among the critical ones are ensuring the peaceful nature of political reforms; establishing and consolidating domestic democratic institutions and standards; restructuring; and ensuring a social orientation that promotes economic transformation and is consolidated by a system of measures and safeguards to preserve social justice and protect society.

The success of the process of reform and the establishment of a healthy, viable national economy clearly depend primarily on the countries directly affected. But this success also has an external component, since it is contingent on the effective support of the leading industrially developed nations, developing countries and other countries with transitional economies. Therefore, a global dependency exists, because the failure of national economies to reform would inevitably entail not only the collapse of democratic institutions but also, in a broader sense, the collapse of democratic ideals

themselves. In other words, the sustainable development of new and transitional democracies — and these represent more than half of the international community — is the key to the sustainability and harmonization of the entire international community on the eve of the third millennium. It is clear, therefore, why there is such a high degree of interest in the new and restored democracies, in their adaptation to international realities, and in the creation of mechanisms that would enhance their integration into existing and emerging international structures.

The new and restored democracies are making their contribution to addressing the needs related to this adaptation by drawing upon the principles of international cooperation already enshrined in a number of declarations and in other strategies and plans of action that are being developed. These include the Manila Declaration and the Managua Declaration and Plan of Action, which was adopted at the Second International Conference on New or Restored Democracies. These documents underscore the need to work out new criteria and forms of interaction among the international community and the new and restored democracies. Areas to be addressed include: easing the debt burden, settling external indebtedness, instituting mechanisms to stimulate investment, providing differential credits, ease the trade protectionism of the industrially developed nations, overcoming the shortfall of investments in development, eliminating poverty, and addressing the costs of restructuring for the needy segments of the population. Of particular interest here for the new democracies in the countries with transitional economies are the liberalization of international trade, the broadening of their export capabilities, the granting to them of most-favoured-nation trade status, increased investment flows and financial support for economic programmes. Such initiatives should take into account the specifics of each country.

In other words, there is a need to offset the losses that, for the new or restored democracies, accompany the transitional period. This group of countries therefore anticipates greater responsiveness and flexibility from international mechanisms. Such adaptation is of mutual interest. We hope that the Third International Conference on New and Restored Democracies — to be held in Bucharest in 1997 — and the international conference on the sustainable development of countries with economies in transition, to be held in Minsk in 1997, will help develop new, effective forms of cooperation among the new or restored democracies, the United Nations and the entire international community. For a number of years Belarus has advocated expanding this international interaction. Together with other countries, it has actively promoted resolutions that have been adopted on the subject of "Support by the United Nations system of the efforts of Governments to promote and consolidate new or restored democracies". The Republic of Belarus was a sponsor of resolution 49/30 and 50/133, and it supports the basic provisions of the draft resolution before us at this session, which reiterates language from the two previous resolutions.

Since the similarity of the goals and needs of countries with transitional economies and those with new or restored democracies is self-evident, we advocate broadening the scope of issues related to countries with transitional economies in the programme of action of the United Nations and its specialized agencies. We also support a broader reflection of these issues in the draft resolution on the issue before us. In our view, resolutions on the issues should in future be complemented by provisions directing the United Nations specialized agencies to increase their attention to the interests and needs of the countries with transitional economies. We propose to focus in future on this aspect of the problem, and we anticipate support from the countries concerned.

Mr. Izquierdo (Ecuador) (*interpretation from Spanish*): Ecuador, as a sponsor of draft resolution A/51/L.20, entitled "Support by the United Nations system of the efforts of Governments to promote and consolidate new or restored democracies", wishes, as on earlier occasions, to voice its firm commitment to democratic processes as vehicles for bringing peace and development to peoples and for strengthening international relations.

My delegation reiterates its view that economic and social development are essential to bolster governance. In other words, such development can strengthen the ethics of power and the rule of law, consolidate democracies and lead to greater respect for human rights. In this regard, we believe that all the efforts and programmes that aim at the priority objective of eradicating poverty should be considered essential.

We also concur with the idea that the spirit of democracy in development, as well as the principle of respect for human rights and fundamental freedoms enshrined in the Charter of the United Nations and in other universal instruments, are interrelated and mutually supportive concepts. As a result, it is the responsibility of the international community to offer — by all ways and means — the greatest possible support for the efforts of countries to promote and consolidate their democratic systems.

Lastly, Ecuador believes that the participation of the United Nations system in this area is essential, and thus we support the convening of the Third International Conference on New and Restored Democracies, due to take place in Bucharest from 2 to 4 September 1997. It is a suitable follow-up to the previous conferences that adopted the Manila Declaration and the Managua Declaration and Plan of Action, the importance of which has been highlighted many times this morning.

Mr. Rantao (Botswana): The subject under discussion is of great interest to my delegation. Botswana has been a practising democracy in a subregion that has hitherto been characterized by political repression and racial bigotry. For much of the past, our democracy was threatened by the existence of oppressive regimes around us.

It had therefore always been our wish to live among like-minded States that uphold the principles of peace, democracy and human rights. We are happy that our dream has come true. Today, southern Africa boasts of democratic Governments throughout its length and breadth.

As the Secretary-General's report indicates, southern Africa has benefited immensely from the initiatives undertaken by the United Nations system, as evidenced by technical and material support for the electoral processes in Angola, Lesotho, Malawi, Mozambique, Namibia and South Africa, in which Botswana participated.

We are obviously happy that our wider region in Africa has also embraced the democratic culture. For us, it is clearly an auspicious moment in history to be able to witness broad consensus emerging among nations of the world in support of democracy and the United Nations system's initiatives to consolidate peace, democracy and sustainable development. Everything possible must be done to ensure that there is no reversal in the gains made in the democratization process. Free men and women are the only insurance we have for world peace and human progress, and a lot will depend largely on what happens today.

Botswana has made a modest contribution to this process by demonstrating that a multi-party system of government can flourish in Africa, and that it is not only feasible but defensible. However, I must note that democracy in Botswana may not necessarily be prescribed as a model to be strictly adhered to by other nations. We believe that the development of a democratic culture is the product of a combination of the history and customs of a people. Accordingly, each nation should develop a democratic system based on its special historical and cultural background.

The western democracies, for example, are not a universal political monolith. These democracies have special and specific characteristics peculiar to the historical and cultural circumstances of each nation. The common denominator in all these democratic systems is the right of every adult to participate freely in the political process that determines the leadership of the country.

There is a lot to be copied or shared in all these systems, but we should guard against attempts to directly transplant them into countries of totally different backgrounds. The ultimate goal of every nation must be to ensure that the people themselves occupy centre stage in the decision-making processes of their country, as they are the subject and object of its development.

Botswana's democracy is not new or restored. It is not a moribund giant that wakes up or regains vitality only every five years, in time for the general elections. It is a vibrant political system that is constantly changing in response to the demands and needs of the electorate. At a recent all-party conference, far-reaching decisions were made in terms of electoral reforms for strengthening the democratic structures of government. The parties agreed to broaden the franchise by reducing the voting age from 21 to 18 years and by extending the franchise to Botswana nationals living abroad, as well as establishing an independent electoral commission.

Democracy without a transparent and accountable public administration is an exercise in futility. It is for this reason that Botswana's National Assembly passed a bill on the establishment of an Office of the Ombudsman, which will become functional by the first part of 1997. This step was taken by Parliament in order to improve public accountability, transparency and the quality of public sector management.

My delegation believes that democratization and the enhancement of good governance are essential conditions for the success of any development strategy. Botswana therefore supports United Nations initiatives and calls for more material and technical support for these initiatives to yield positive results ultimately benefiting all humankind.

To sum up, Botswana is not a new or restored democracy. It is nonetheless an evolving democracy

whose achievements still require sustenance and consolidation. We will be ready to seek the support of the United Nations system should such an eventuality ever arise.

Mr. Meléndez Barahona (El Salvador) (*interpretation from Spanish*): I am honoured to participate, on behalf of the Central American countries, in the discussion on agenda item 41 entitled "Support by the United Nations system of the efforts of Governments to promote and consolidate new or restored democracies". We wish to express our support for and solidarity with the statement made by the representative of Nicaragua, who, following up the Second International Conference on New or Restored Democracies, undertook an initiative to have the United Nations system examine ways and means of promoting new or restored democracies.

Our subregion has made significant progress since the signing of the Esquipulas II agreements in 1987, in which the procedure for the establishment of a just and lasting peace in Central America was adopted, and in particular since 1989, when the Central American Presidents called on the United Nations to participate in the verification of the implementation of the commitments undertaken to move forward along the path of peace, freedom, democracy and development. The political scene has been marked by the shift from a military struggle to a political struggle, from repressive regimes to the establishment of democratic institutions, from destruction to reconstruction, and from rivalries and conflicts to cooperation, dialogue and concerted action.

I do not believe there is any need to reiterate the entire history of the Central American process. Since 1983 the General Assembly has been considering the question in the region — both in general and in particular terms — presenting reports each year on important events and on the role played by the Organization in seeking political and democratic solutions to the serious economic, political and social problems besetting the Central American peoples. Indeed, the General Assembly yesterday took up the question of the situation in Central America. The debate on that issue and the content of draft resolution A/51/L.18, as well as the Secretary-General's report, reflected the advances made in the peacemaking process in Central America and the progress achieved in our efforts to fashion and consolidate a region of peace, freedom, democracy and development.

It is noteworthy that during the crisis of the 1980s, possibilities emerged and political room was created that permitted the will of the Central American peoples to be expressed, allowing them to begin to enjoy democratic freedom. This gave rise to a political system that replaced authoritarian Governments with civilian governments freely elected by their people.

Today Central America has practical institutions and procedures that aim to meet the basic needs of the actors, in both the political and economic areas. From the political standpoint, participation in the political process is pluralistic in that there are shared standards and values, and even the differences have a commonality that strengthens democratic values. A clear example of this is the participation of the Frente Sandinista de Liberación Nacional in Nicaragua, and the Frente Farabundo Martí para la Liberación Nacional (FMLN), in El Salvador, in democratic electoral processes. We have no doubt that this will also soon be true in Guatemala, with the eventual signing of the agreement that will end the armed conflict in this fraternal Central American country.

Central America understands that democracy cannot be sustained simply through political freedom. Aware of the fact that economic and social problems related to unemployment, social degradation, poverty and the environment contribute to insecurity and instability, it had adopted an ambitious and large-scale regional development strategy. This strategy is governed by the principles of respect for life, improvement of living standards, respect for the vitality and diversity of the region, participatory democracy, respect for and protection of human rights, the preservation of the environment, among others.

In this context, we should mention the signing of the Framework Treaty on Democratic Security in Central America, adopted at the Seventeenth Summit Meeting of the Central American Presidents, held in Honduras in 1995. The Treaty provides, among other things, for the strengthening of the power of civil society; a reasonable balance of forces in the region; security of individuals and their property; the elimination of poverty and extreme poverty; the promotion of sustainable development; protection of the environment; and the eradication of violence, corruption, impunity, terrorism, and trafficking in drugs and arms.

To this end, a Central American security commission has been set up to fulfil the provisions of the Framework Treaty. It consists of the Deputy Ministers for Foreign Affairs and Deputy Ministers or competent authorities in the defence and public security sectors. It is important to

note that while these are favourable circumstances for intensifying the democratization process in Central America, serious problems and limited resources impede our efforts. However, we understand that these obstacles must be overcome by efforts similar to, and as urgently undertaken, as those that overcame the military crisis of the 1980s.

It is clear that a trend exists to consolidate democracy in the Central American region through the modernization of the State, as the entity that should guarantee the civil, political, economic, social and cultural rights of the Central American peoples and strengthen the rule of law and democratic governance. Examples of this trend are the free elections that have been held in recent years — elections that were open, competitive and fair; the respect for existing legislation; the creation of constitutional courts and the appointment of special prosecutors for human rights; the existence of independent electoral tribunals and multi-party parliaments; the promotion of autonomous and efficient judicial systems and the development of programmes to promote a culture of peace and democracy.

On this last point, at this session, El Salvador, together with other countries of Central America and of other regions, is proposing, in the context of the United Nations Decade for Human Rights Education, an initiative on the theme of a culture of peace. This, in our opinion, is key to ensuring the consolidation of a democratic society, and we hope it will receive the support of all Member States.

Central America, a region in transition, is making tremendous efforts to consolidate democracy. However, it still requires the solidarity and support of the international community to make further progress and avoid stagnating or, worse, backsliding, in order to prevent any recurrence of worse regional conflict of the 1980s. For this reason, Central America welcomes the report of the Secretary-General (A/51/512) and is a sponsor of draft resolution A/51/L.20. We are confident that it will be adopted by consensus.

The Acting President: We have heard the last speaker in the debate on this item.

I should like to inform members that at the request of the sponsors of the draft resolution contained in document A/51/L.20, the decision concerning the draft resolution will be taken at a subsequent date to be announced in the *Journal*.

The meeting rose at 12.55 p.m.